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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1985 a task force comprising private sector representatives was convened to formulate recommendations regarding the development of an overall policy framework for employment and training and related systems in Virginia. The task force was asked to focus their efforts on the following policy areas: training and retraining the adult population for employment, preparing youth for employment, and linking employment and training with economic development. The task force recommended the establishment of a policy framework that defines complementary goals and objectives for all employment and training and related programs as the first step in the development of any new comprehensive training and employment policy. They further stressed that the adoption and monitoring of such a policy framework must be precipitated by the highest levels of state government, preferably at the gubernatorial level. The creation and use of broadly structured committees of cabinet and agency heads in order to guide planning and service delivery consistent with the framework's goals and objectives were also found to be critical to the success of any attempt to revamp Virginia's training and employment policies. The two ingredients that were mentioned as being basic to such a plan were the (1) establishment of a coordinating authority consisting of all the institutions involved and (2) development of an overall plan to reduce duplication and sort out roles and responsibilities. (Appendixes to this report include lists of the members of the task force and the individual task force work groups.) (MN)

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THE NEXT STEPS

The Development Of A Fully Productive Work Force In Virginia

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A Report of the GJTCC Private Sector Task Force To the Governor's Job Training Coordinating Council

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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January 27, 1986

The Honorable Gerald L. Baliles
Governor of Virginia
Capitol Square
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Baliles:

I am pleased to present the final recommendations of the Private Sector Task Force of the Governor's Job Training Coordinating Council. These recommendations represent the Task Force's initial ideas regarding how the education/employment/training systems in Virginia can be enhanced to better serve Virginians. It is purposely not a detailed critical analysis of those agencies which currently administer these systems.

You will note that the document begins with two brief background pieces entitled, "The Need" and "The Goal." These sections are summaries of larger informational documents prepared by the Task Force. Although these larger documents provide significantly more data and analysis in support of the Report, the Task Force did not include them as a part of the final report. They are, however, available to any interested party.

The Task Force recommendations are deliberately generic, as a lot needs to be done to alter the historical relationships of the institutions and activities involved in employment and training. We hope, however, that these recommendations are the continuation of a long-term process to carefully think through policy and program options. Hence, the Report calls on the State to implement a policy framework to guide that ongoing effort.

We wish to thank the numerous State agency personnel who provided public hearing testimony and presentations at the Task Force meetings. Without this valuable assistance and the excellent staff support provided by the Governor's Employment and Training Department, the development of this Report would not have been possible.

In whole, the Task Force members appreciated the opportunity to forward some of the concerns and ideas of the private sector regarding how Virginia can best educate and train our citizens of the Commonwealth for employment.

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Renfroe

Lawrence M. Renfroe
Chairman

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1985, the Governor's Job Training Coordinating Council established the Private Sector Task Force for the purpose of formulating recommendations regarding an overall policy framework for employment and training and related systems in Virginia. This report is a complement to and continuation of interagency efforts that began in July 1983 with the publication of the Virginia Employment and Training Task Force Report.

Comprised exclusively of private sector representatives from State and local boards and councils, the Task Force received testimony at a public hearing, consulted with numerous employment and training experts, and then focused their efforts into three policy areas:[1]

- **Training/Retraining the Adult Population for Employment**
- **Preparing Youth for Employment**
- **Linking Employment and Training with Economic Development**

The findings and recommendations of these three work groups call upon the Commonwealth to continue to review the processes for allocating resources designed to prepare Virginians for employment. It is a call for continued action borne of a recognition that the current patchwork quilt of employment, training, and education programs and policies often work at cross purposes.

Entitled "The Next Steps" the report is a frank discussion of the barriers to effective planning and resource allocation among the major actors involved in the development of a fully productive work force in Virginia.

The report calls for the establishment of a policy framework that defines complementary goals and objectives for all employment and training and related programs as the necessary next step.

Within such a framework, the roles and resources of separate agencies can be identified, arranged with respect to a common set of goals and objectives, and projected with respect to a set of performance criteria or measures that can be applied to each.

The adoption and monitoring of such a policy framework must be precipitated by the highest levels of State government, preferably at the gubernatorial level.

The creation and use of broadly structured Cabinet and Agency Heads committees is critical to guide planning and service delivery consistent with the framework's goals and objectives.

Two basic ingredients of such a plan should be:

a. **the establishment of a coordinating authority consisting of all the institutions involved, and**

b. **the development of an overall plan to reduce duplication and sort out roles and responsibilities.**

The report does not call for a new State bureaucracy. Rather, it is a recognition of the necessity to put in place an effective mechanism for joint planning, service delivery and evaluation among those responsible for preparing and maintaining a fully productive work force. It recognizes that, while much has been done through the cooperative action of the actors involved, much more can and should be done to continue the momentum.

[1]Attention was also given to strategies to best market Virginia's employment and training systems. Lacking policy implications, these recommendations are not included here, but instead have been presented as a separate report to the Governor's Employment and Training Department.

THE NEED

Virginia's Labor Force: A Two-Sided Coin

Since the end of this country's last major recession in July of 1982, the Commonwealth has experienced a robust economic recovery that has given rise to thousands of new job opportunities. For those who have tracked the State's most recent fortunes, the litany of successes is familiar. For example, from 1983 to 1984 the average number of unemployed persons in the State dropped by over 25,000, despite a significant increase in the average number of new labor force entrants. In June of 1985, record employment levels were established in both the construction and service industries. Further, from September 1984 to September 1985, monthly unemployment rates in Virginia ranged from a low of only 4.4 percent to a high of slightly less than 6 percent. Finally, the State's 1984 average unemployment rate was only 5.1 percent — 27 percent below the national average of 7.0 percent.

As a measure of the health of Virginia's work force, these figures are strong indicators that the State's labor market has recovered from the crippling effects of the last recession. However, an exclusive focus on Virginia's aggregate unemployment level is not enough, because it precludes a careful scrutiny and analysis of the dynamics of unemployment in the State. Despite persistent decreases in the level of unemployment across Virginia, the labor market has not successfully mitigated the acute joblessness among some groups in the labor force, i.e., non-white youths and adults, offenders, welfare recipients, handicapped, and dislocated workers. These groups have experienced considerable unemployment during economic declines, yet they have benefited only marginally during the recent economic upswing.

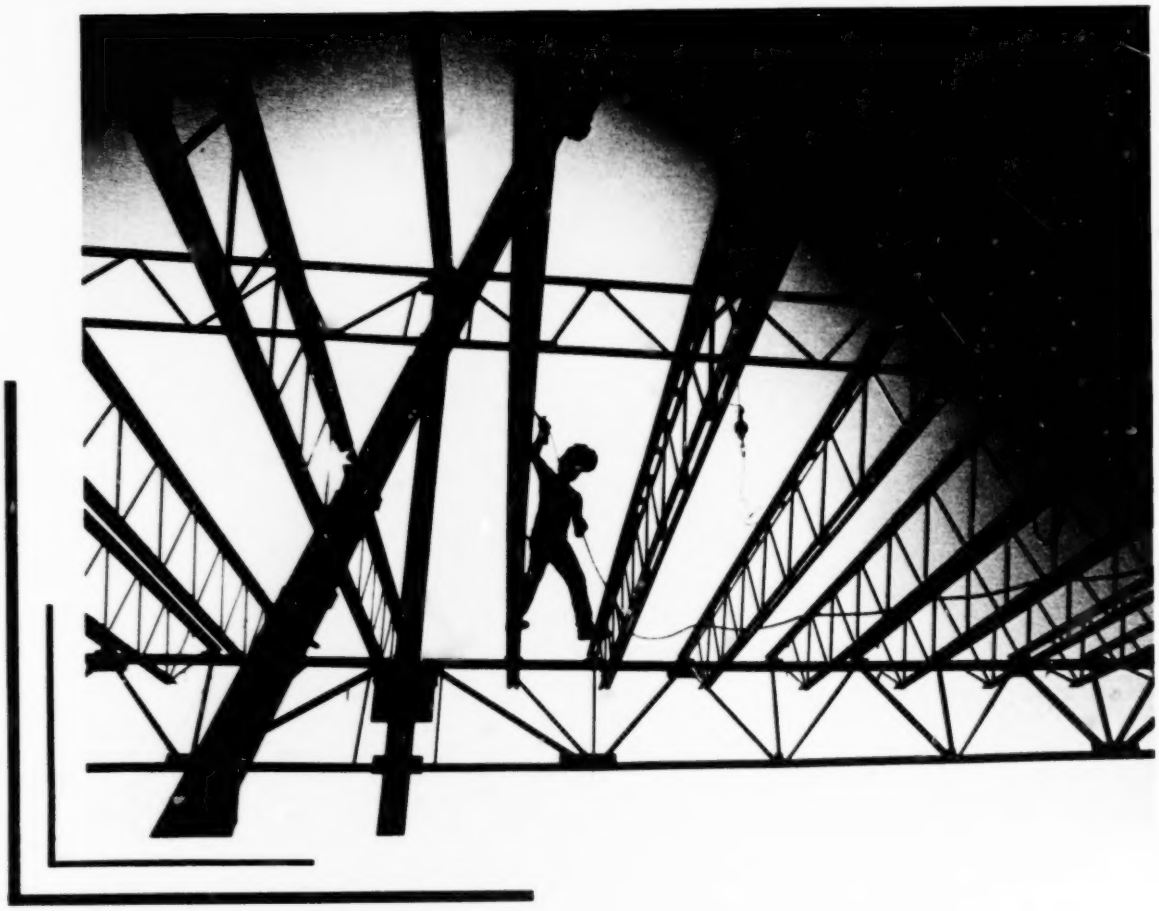
Statistics for 1985 reveal unemployment rates for non-whites that are more than twice the rate for whites. Among minority teenagers, the unemployment rate topped 22 percent in the first half of the year — more than double the level for white teenagers and over **five** times the rate for white adults.

Before policy interventions can be crafted to address these seemingly intractable unemployment problems, the causes of these problems must be critically examined. Most researchers contend that supply-side barriers such as inadequate educational training, limited work experience, and a multiplicity of social difficulties effectively constrain employment for the structurally unemployed.

Youth Structural Unemployment

For Virginia's youth, the primary barrier to employment appears to be related to their failure to complete high school or to master basic skills. High school dropouts represent the largest portion of the State's 16 to 19 year olds who are either unemployed or completely absent from the labor force. Other youth leave school with a diploma without having acquired the ability to read or perform basic mathematical computations. Studies have shown that the future employment prospects of youth who are not in school or who did not master basic skills are seriously diminished. This critical educational deficiency and/or lack of a meaningful credential exacerbates the already difficult problem of preparing youth for the rigors of a changing labor market.

Closely related to the poor educational performance for many economically disadvantaged youths is the problem of teenage parenting. Unfortunately, many disadvantaged minority teenagers are having babies without adequate capacity to support such children. National data show that in 1980 more than half of the teenage births that occurred in this



country were among minority females. If the current fertility rate among all teenagers is not reversed, nearly 40 percent of all female youth, age 14 in 1981, will become pregnant before reaching age 20. For many of them, income maintenance (welfare) will be their sole source of revenue.

Many studies show that these teenage births are usually predictors of significant high school and work disruptions, larger family sizes, and less likelihood of future employment. Thus, many minority female youths who become teenage parents essentially have their life scripts written for them. What will often follow is an end to their educational training, long spells of unemployment, and a legacy of welfare dependency.

Adult Structural Unemployment

The problems of adult structural unemployment are painfully similar to the youth problem, but with added dimensions. One of the crosscutting characteristics of this adult population is their illiteracy. While obviously not all of Virginia's unemployed are illiterate, statistics from the Department of Education suggest that the problem is acute and growing. Poorly trained as teenagers, many of these adults are unable to recognize letters, associate them with sounds and combine them into words, sentences and text. Others are functionally illiterate and are able to decode and master letter sound recognition. Their problem stems from an inability to comprehend written materials.

An additional problem for the structurally unemployed adult is their lack of a work history. Employment for this group is usually short-term in low-wage occupations. Many lack useful skills and need more exposure to the basic requirements of supervised employment. Others approach the age of 30 with an employment history replete with abbreviated unstructured piece work.

A significant portion of the female parents among the structurally unemployed adult population are welfare recipients. Most are completely dependent on the government for the care of the children. Less educated than the general population, these people must cope with the devastating effects of poverty and the demands of single parenthood.

Recent research indicates that these welfare recipients prefer to work and plan to leave the welfare system when it becomes economically feasible. Unfortunately, their skill deficiencies severely limit their employment opportunities. When employment is located, it is often in a marginal enterprise characterized by low pay and an almost complete absence of job security.

The Role of Government in Preparing the Structurally Unemployed for Work

The persistence of structural unemployment, its causes and attendant social ills, raise the policy question of what the appropriate role of government should be in addressing this problem. Most research indicates that the majority of the labor force does not need direct governmental assistance to make the transition into the labor force or to maintain an effective labor force attachment. However, for the reasons discussed earlier, certain groups of citizens are temporarily or permanently marginal to the labor force even in the face of strong economic vitality. The primary challenge of public policy then is to bridge the gap that these groups face as they attempt to move into employment. It is recognized that a comprehensive policy to coordinate all employment/training/education activities in the State should be the first step in bridging this gap. The following section discusses the development of such a comprehensive policy, the existing barriers to its development, and strategies for overcoming those barriers.

THE GOAL

The Development of a Comprehensive Employment/Training/ Education Policy in Virginia: Strategies for Coordination

In developing strategies that can lead to a comprehensive employment/training/education policy framework for the Commonwealth, it is necessary initially to identify existing barriers to the development of such a coordinated policy.

1. **Institutional Fragmentation**

   As is often the case in governmental structures, in Virginia the employment/training functions are allocated to various agencies. According to the Department of Planning and Budget, thirteen major agencies have responsibility for administering twenty different employment/training related programs. They estimate that these programs will serve approximately one million individuals during the 1984-86 Biennium.

   Adding to the patchwork system described above is the segmentation of programs among State agencies; e.g., the State level administration of the Job Training Partnership Act is divided between four different State agencies.

   While these divisions of responsibilities may foster coordination, they put a premium on "going the extra mile" to establish mechanisms for comprehensive planning.

2. **Conceptual Barriers**

   With programs apportioned among so many different agencies, and recognizing that these programs have different objectives and performance measures; it is easy to appreciate the need for an overall framework for planning and resource allocation. For these programs are lodged within agencies that have different perceptions of their role in the employment/training/education system. Hence, their various goals and performance measures may or may not be appropriate, or more importantly, may be mutually exclusive and/or counter-productive.

   "These differences in self perception and the way in which each professional judges his or her own successful performance can lead to conflicts not only in use of resources and the importance accorded certain rules or regulations, but in the policy direction attached to the overall effort."[1]

3. **Allocation Barriers**

   Conceptual barriers often lead to allocation barriers. If overall goals and performance measures are not established, conflicts will arise regarding the targeting of resources and/or programs to certain communities, industries or individuals.

   In Virginia, resources are targeted based on the individual goals of each program with no overall framework designed to plan and deliver services in a comprehensive and efficient manner.

4. **Failure to Consider All Available Tools**

   Because of the State's segregated approach to strategic service delivery, all available tools within the employment/training/education related systems have not been used to enhance the programs. In Virginia, relatively little attention has been given to the development of overall strategies for utilizing existing tax incentives and community and neighborhood development resources to enhance employment/training/education opportunities for the structurally unemployed.

[1]**Barriers and Opportunities for Linking Programs and Policies**, National Governor's Association, 1985.

5. Inability to Assess Impact

Insufficient measures have been established to assess the impact of the State's efforts. Lacking this information, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tailor a strategy for targeting employment/training/education policies.

6. Communication/Comprehension

Finally, it is noted that although most administrators with government agencies will readily indicate that they do communicate with their counterparts in other employment/training/education related agencies, a question remains regarding the quality of these communications and the level of comprehension on both sides.

Strategies For Removing Barriers

1. Articulating the Commitment

The establishment of a policy framework that defines complementary goals and objectives for all employment/training/education related programs is a necessary first step. Within this framework, the roles and resources of separate agencies can be identified, arranged with respect to a common set of goals and objectives, and projected with respect to a set of performance criteria or measures that can be applied to each.

The institutionalization and monitoring of such a policy framework must be precipitated by the highest levels of State government, preferably at the gubernatorial level. The securing and maintaining of the commitment to such a process must be an on-going function of the Secretaries and Agency Heads involved in employment/training/education related activities. In addition, a strong citizens' participation mechanism should be created to monitor the implementation of policies consistent with the policy goals and objectives.

2. Broadening the Institutional Base of Discussion

The creation and use of broadly structured Cabinet and Agency Heads committees in this process is critical. This enhances the level of knowledge and expertise regarding the issues and facilitates the negotiation process necessary for the development of a comprehensive plan to reduce structural unemployment.

3. Creating a State Policy Framework

Much benefit could be gained through the creation of a policy framework, in which the goals and resources of separate agencies are identified, arrayed with respect to a common set of goals and objectives, and projected with respect to a set of performance criteria or measures that will be applied to each.

Two basic ingredients of such plan would be:

a. the establishment of a coordinating authority involving all the institutions involved, and
b. the development of an overall plan to reduce duplication and sort out roles and responsibilities.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

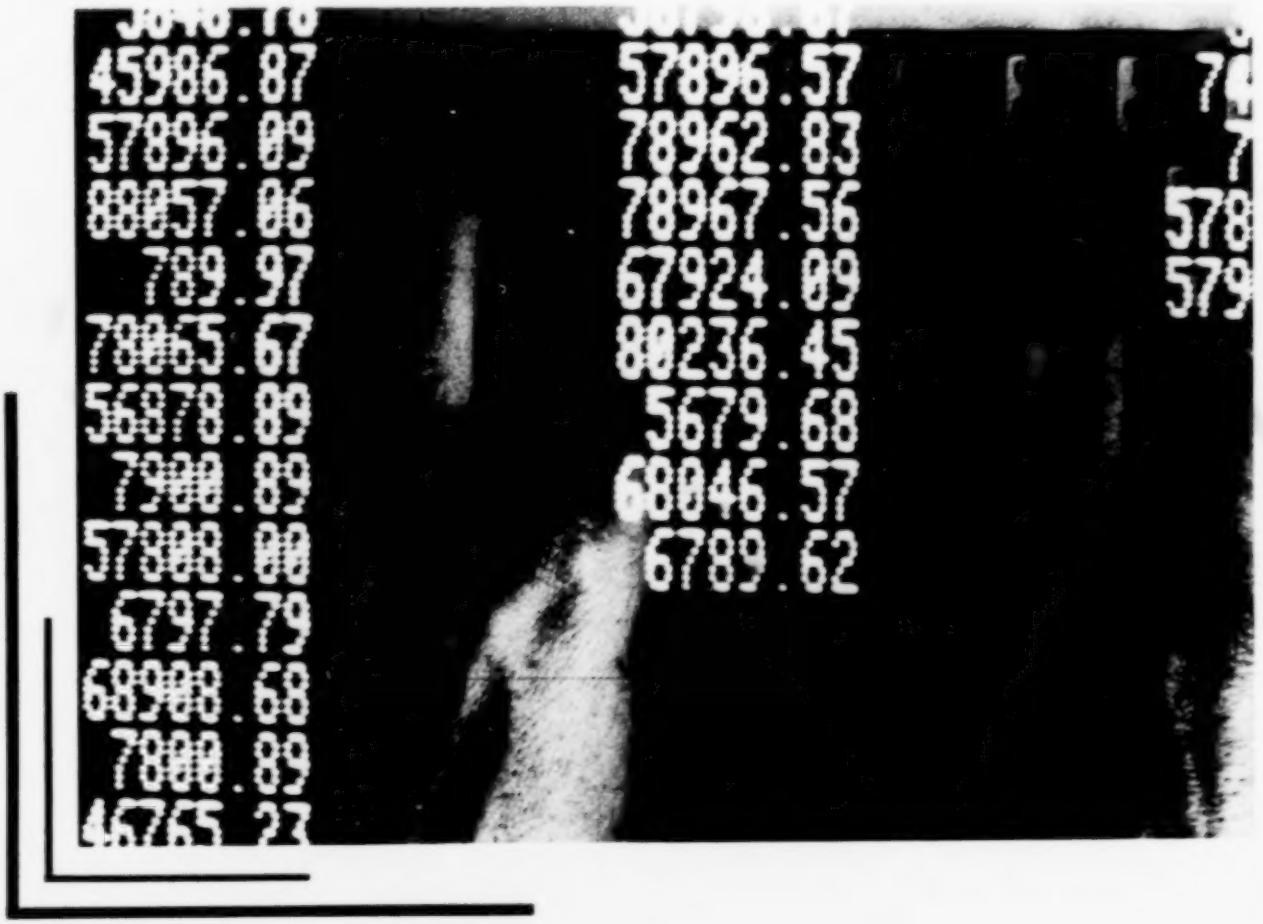
Recommendations Regarding a Comprehensive Policy for Educating/ Employing/Training the Adult and Youth Populations

The following is a complete list of the recommendations of the Private Sector Task Force:

1. **The Commonwealth should develop a comprehensive policy and program framework** based on a recognition that:
   - employers — not government — are the prime movers in the labor market function;
   - the local marketplace will determine the nature of the jobs available and the skills required for successful employment experiences;
   - the primary and secondary educational systems are responsible for preparing citizens for work with regard to basic communication and computational skills and imbuing them with a sense of civic and personal responsibility;
   - problems of permanent economic dislocation are primarily geographically concentrated;
   - the primary role of general governance (as distinct from education) must be that of a broker, facilitating the natural interaction between the principal actors in the labor market — employers and current and potential employees.
2. **The strategy for attacking unemployment should be developed which would incorporate a two-tiered attack on unemployment — short-term and long-term.** Such an approach must include a sorting out of respective roles and responsibilities and a careful measurement of the outcomes of the educational experience. In the interim, supportive systems, i.e., ABE, JTPA, Dislocated Workers Programs and Employment Services Programs for Welfare Recipients must continue to provide remediation efforts in concert with the schools for the adult population.
3. **The employment/training/education systems should develop strategies in consonance with an overall education/employment and training policy framework.** The first step is a recognition of a comprehensive attack on the problem of illiteracy and an identification of who needs help. Educators and trainers should:
   - assess both basic skill levels of those seeking training and identify the levels needed for success in training courses to assure a match between them;
   - provide significant literacy and remedial instruction as appropriate;
   - organize the array of adult education and remedial programs to make them comprehensive and accessible for companies and the public;
   - make remedial activities relevant to participants' job goals and employment prospects;

While the emphasis on academic excellence is commendable, without special efforts to improve educational services to at-risk youth, the effort may well result in pushing more ill-prepared young people out the door before graduation. Continued emphasis on remediation rather than preventive strategies before adulthood will continue.

4. The second step is **the development of a personalized service delivery strategy for those people most in need.** A strong case can be made for initiatives that focus on groups in the labor force that have substantial employment problems. Welfare recipients, minorities, offenders, handicapped, dropouts, and dislocated workers have significantly higher unemployment rates and lower educational attainments. Minority groups and individuals with less than a high school education are over-represented in low-skill occupations where less adult education and training take place.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5. A final strategy would be **the establishment of an employment/training/education coordination function by the Governor for the following purposes:**

- to coordinate the policies and administration of employment/training/education programs and income maintenance and support services among state agencies;
- to review the delivery, operating performance, effectiveness, and degree of integration of education, income maintenance and support services, and employment/training services;
- to consult with the Governor on income maintenance, employment, training, and education; provide assistance to the Governor related to income maintenance and employment/training/education; and recommend to the Governor and the legislature improvements in the delivery of employment/training/education services and income maintenance and support services;
- to confer with and advise state agencies and local service units that are responsible for income maintenance and support services, and employment/training/education services;
- to ensure coordination and cooperation among state and federal agencies, county and local governments, and private service providers serving on a contract basis;
- to prepare and oversee the implementation of the biennial plan;
- to establish coordination criteria for State agencies to be used in the reveiw of State and local plans, particularly as it relates to the coordination of economic development and employment/training/education;
- to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of local service units' income maintenance and support services and their employment/training/education services;
- to report to the legislature regarding changes needed to more adequately serve the needs of those who are unemployed, underemployed, or untrained;
- to design and monitor the development and administration of the intake, referral, and inventory system;
- to enhance the delivery of employment/training/education services and income maintenance and support services by working with the appropriate state representatives to coordinate data bases and information systems among state agencies, including the Departments of Economic Development, Employment/Training, Social Services, the Employment Commission, and Education Department;
- to review and make recommendations concerning plans of federally-sponsored employment/training/education programs and demonstration projects;
- to develop standards for plans required of state agencies;
- to review and approve standards for the local service unit plans;
- to recommend to individual service units annual performance objectives that include realistic goals for reducing or managing unemployment rates and welfare caseloads, for use in preparing their local service unit plans; and
- to seek input from representatives of local service units, business, and labor on the delivery and development of employment/training/education services and income maintenance and support services.

Such strategies must recognize the need to try innovative approaches to remediation within the general context of the existing institutions. For example, schools and colleges must develop more flexible programs and calendars. Traditional classroom models with rigid semester-based schedules and "seat-time" measures of success do not serve illiterate adults, dropouts, or behind-grade youth well.

Admittedly, these observations need further refinement before actualized in legislation and policy. Nevertheless, the nature of the problem is so compelling that they represent the first step in a complex process of realigning our systems to better prepare and retain a skilled work force. They can only be the beginning.

Special Policy Recommendations For Youth

1. A **Statewide** policy should be developed to structure and guide the allocation for all youth employment/training and education resources in the State of Virginia.
2. Basic skills should be taught in the educational system, particularly in the elementary and secondary schools.
3. High school dropouts and potential dropouts should be identified as a priority service group for all State-administered youth employment/training/education programs. The method of identifying and counting dropouts should be reviewed in the State.
4. The State should require the use of a fully financed, competency-based strategy that would develop basic skill and preemployment training competencies before any occupationally specific skills training is provided to the secondary school age youth. The preemployment skills training strategy would expose youth to useful labor market information, impart basic job search skills, teach interview techniques, and discuss the behavior and dress requirements of employment.
5. Basic skill remediation programs should be established in elementary and middle schools to ensure that all youth who enter high school have measurably mastered basic skills.
6. A remediation training program should be developed in the secondary education system to teach basic skills to poorly trained students prior to their enrollment in other education or postsecondary curricula.
7. The secondary (academic and vocational) education curricula should be restructured to provide emphasis on preemployment skills training development.
8. All secondary school students should have access to preemployment guidance counseling. The guidance counseling system should be upgraded to improve the counselor's knowledge of the labor market.
9. All State agencies that administer youth employment programs should be required to integrate the expertise and resources of the Virginia Employment Commission in their goals and objectives, so that their training programs reflect the realities of the local market.
10. A vital role should be established for the private sector in the curriculum planning process for all State agencies that administer employment/training/education services for youth.

Special Policy Recommendations For Coordinating Education/ Employment/Training And Economic Development

1. The Governor should establish a working group representing Secretaries and/or Agency Heads whose agencies have responsibility for employment/training/education and economic development activities in Virginia. The Working Group would be charged with developing strategies whereby:

   certain employment/training education funds and activities could be targeted towards the enhancement of economic development activities to include:

   (a) the community certification program and anticipated recertification efforts; and

   (b) the small business development program, provided that the recipients of such assistance be new small businesses and that incentives be provided to make it easier for small businesses to gain a profit in the early stages of their development.

2. The Agency Heads from the Department of Economic Development and the Governor's Employment and Training Department should jointly survey local economic development organizations to ascertain their current perception of employment/training/education programs; and based on survey results, appoint staff to develop strategies to deal with the results of the survey.

APPENDIX A

Private Sector Task Force Members

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New River/Mount Rogers Private Industry Council
Senior Vice President, United Virginia Bank
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Members
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APPENDIX B

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